

Libby - press

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To the Editor

EPA committed to local community

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The June 14, 2011, Kootenai Valley Record reported on a meeting between the Lincoln County commissioners and staff of the Environmental Protection Agency. In response to that article, EPA wants to reassure Libby residents that the agency is committed to establishing toxicity values for Libby amphibole asbestos to support its cleanup efforts within the community. We are committed to doing so expeditiously while using the best available science.

The Integrated Risk Information System (IRIS) review process used by EPA for adopting toxicity values is by design extensive, but is progressing smoothly. In May of this year, the EPA

briefed the community on the draft toxicity values for Libby amphibole asbestos. We did so to fulfill our promise to keep the people of Libby fully apprised as this scientific process progresses. We will continue to keep the community fully informed.

The review of the draft toxicity values by other federal agencies was completed the week of June 13, 2011, so the process is continuing as it is designed. After the comments received from other federal agencies are addressed, the draft toxicity values themselves will then be subject to public comment and review by a panel of independent asbestos experts.

Administrator Jackson and the agency are

committed to the people of Libby. The fact that we took the highly unusual step of briefing the community on the draft toxicity values before their public release, and even before the interagency review, is a reflection of that commitment.

EPA expects this rigorous IRIS process to result in the adoption of final toxicity values for Libby amphibole asbestos that represent the best science available. In the meantime, our efforts to work with the people of Libby to reduce risk from exposure to Libby amphibole asbestos will continue.

Martin Hestmark
For Carol Campbell,
Assistant Regional
Administrator